

W/F  
DOB: [REDACTED]  
AR DL# [REDACTED]

THE STATE OF ARKANSAS

TO ANY SHERIFF, CONSTABLE, CORONER, POLICEMAN OR MARSHAL OF THIS STATE:

YOU ARE COMMANDED FORTHWITH TO ARREST

CHRISTINE RENEE SOUTHARD  
LKA: 42 TAMSWORTH CIRCLE  
BELLA VISTA, AR 72714

AND BRING HIM BEFORE THE BENTON COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT TO ANSWER AN  
INFORMATION IN THAT COURT AGAINST HIM FOR:

THEFT OF PROPERTY CLASS C FELONY 5-36-103;

A FELONY, A MISDEMEANOR, OR IF COURT BE ADJOURNED FOR THE TERM THAT YOU  
DELIVER HIM TO THE JAILER OF BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF SAID COURT THIS 9TH DAY OF MAY 2012

BRENDA DESHIELDS, CLERK

BY Wickner Hopkins D.C.

STATE OF ARKANSAS - COUNTY OF BENTON )SS

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_

DULY SERVED THE WITHIN WARRANT BY ARRESTING THE WITHIN DEFENDANT.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SHERIFF

BY \_\_\_\_\_ D.S.

CIR118

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS  
**FILED**

STATE OF ARKANSAS

2012 MAY 9 PM 4 12

PLAINTIFF

v.

BRENDA DESHIELDS  
CLERK AND RECORDER  
BENTON COUNTY, AR.

DEFENDANT

**Christine Renee Southard**  
**DOB: [REDACTED] W/F**  
**AR DL# [REDACTED]**  
**LKA: 42 Tamsworth Circle**  
**Bella Vista, AR 72714**

**AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE TO OBTAIN AN ARREST WARRANT**

COMES NOW, Sergeant Jeremy Felton of the Benton County Sheriff's Office and does state that the records of the Benton County Sheriff's Office indicate the following:

On April 30, 2012, I was asked to investigate a theft at the Benton County Clerk's Office. Initial information obtained was an employee had taken several thousands of dollars from the office. After receiving the information I called and spoke to Benton County Clerk, Tena O'Brien. Arrangements were made with O'Brien for me to go to her office for an interview.

On April 30, 2012 at 1545 hours I conducted an interview with O'Brien. O'Brien told me that her administrative assistant, Christine Southard had stolen around \$46,000 from the County Clerk's Office. Southard has been employed at the County Clerk's Office since October of 1999. In 2009 Southard was promoted to administrative assistant. With the position, Southard would act in the absence of the elected official. She also had authorization to the bank accounts, including check writing and prepared all of the reports, such as the monthly bank reconciliation reports.

O'Brien stated that a week or two ago the Legislative Auditors began their audit of the Benton County Clerk's Office. Rebekah Craven was conducting the audit for 2011. On Friday, April 27, 2012, Craven returned the books and told O'Brien she had found some discrepancies

between the bank statements and the monthly reports. The discrepancies were noted from August of 2011 to December of 2011. Craven asked O'Brien if they could talk about the discrepancies and a meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 30, 2012. After speaking to Craven, O'Brien spoke to Southard and told her what Craven said. Southard initially told O'Brien there were some outstanding deposits. O'Brien said she asked Southard to try and locate the discrepancies over the weekend.

This morning, April 30, 2012, around 0730, Southard went into O'Brien's office and told her she had been taking money. Southard provided O'Brien with monthly bank reconciliation reports showing the money she had taken. On the December bank reconciliation report Southard wrote down the monthly totals she had taken. According to the December bank reconciliation report, Southard wrote the total amount she had taken as \$46,059.97. To verify the amount, auditors from the state are reviewing the records to determine the official amount taken. Southard told O'Brien she would take the cash from the deposits and hold checks back until the next day to make the discrepancy good. According to the documents Southard provided to O'Brien, the theft began in August of 2011. In addition, the Benton County Clerk has a Trust checking account for probate. Southard said she wrote two different checks, both \$1,200, and deposited those checks with into the other bank account. I asked O'Brien if she thought Southard had any of the money left at her house that she had taken. O'Brien said she didn't think so because Southard lost her house, and Southard told her she didn't pay any debts with the money she had taken.

O'Brien also said she had a policy in place that one person would write the receipts, a different person would write the deposit, and a different person would make the deposits. O'Brien said at some point the employees were told that Southard would take the deposits to the

bank. I asked O'Brien if Southard told the employees she would take the deposits to the bank. O'Brien said she didn't know for sure but thought she had. O'Brien said she didn't know if Southard would rewrite the deposit slips to reflect what was actually deposited into the bank. O'Brien said she knew Southard financial difficulties. Southard also revealed to O'Brien on April 30, 2012, that she had a gambling problem.

O'Brien said she spoke with County Attorney George Spence and told him what happened. Subsequently Southard was terminated.

After speaking to O'Brien, I drove to 42 Tamworth Circle in Bella Vista and made contact with Southard. I asked Southard if she would be willing to speak to me in my vehicle. Southard said she would. Prior to asking Southard any questions, I advised Southard of her Miranda rights which she stated she understood. Southard said she spoke with an attorney earlier and was advised not to provide a statement. The interview was concluded.

All receipts and documents were turned over to the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee for review.

On May 4, 2012, I called and spoke to Jerry McCarty, the field audit supervisor with the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee. I asked Jerry if he would be able to provide me with any information regarding how much money was missing. Jerry said he wouldn't be able to until the special audit was completed but suggested that I meet with him on May 9, 2012 at their office in Fayetteville so I could review some of the records.

On May 9, 2012, I met with Jerry, Rebekah Craven and Mark Marley. Jerry showed me the records for January and February of 2012. During these months, a bank deposit slip was written out by employees of the Benton County Clerk's Office. These records were recorded in a bank deposit book. On the deposit slips, the total cash was entered. Each check was also

recorded on the deposit slip. The total daily amount was listed on the bottom. A second daily deposit slip was written each day by Southard. No cash was recorded on the deposit slips, only the checks.

I reviewed the deposit slip written by the employee and compared them to the deposit slip written by Southard for the months of January 2012 and February 2012. Attached to the back of Southard's deposit slip were the deposit receipts from the bank. The deposit receipts from the bank reflected only the checks being deposited. Rebekah said she has also compared the daily transaction receipts against the original daily deposit slip for accuracy. The total amount missing in January is \$4,900.00. The total amount missing in February is \$4,764.25. The total for the two months is \$9,664.25.

Jerry said he hoped to have the audit completed in a few weeks that would have the total amount taken from August of 2011 through April of 2012.

Obviously, based on Southard's statements to O'Brien, the amount she stole is expected to be greater than \$9,664.25. Therefore, once the audit is complete and the final amount is determined by the audit, it is anticipated that the classification of felony will be raised.

THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, the State joins me in requesting that an arrest warrant be issued for Christine Renee Southard, DOB: 10-05-1970, W/F, for the offense of: **Theft of Property, §5-36-103, Class C Felony.**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

FILED

STATE OF ARKANSAS

2012 MAY 9 PM 4 13 PLAINTIFF

v.

BRENDA DESHIELDS  
CLERK AND RECORDER  
BENTON COUNTY, AR. DEFENDANT

Christine Renee Southard

DOB: [REDACTED] W/F


AR DL# [REDACTED]

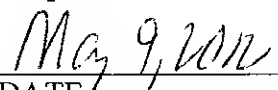
LKA: 42 Tamsworth Circle

Bella Vista, AR 72714

ORDER

I hereby find that this sworn affidavit demonstrates reasonable and probable cause for the issuance of a warrant of arrest for the above-named individual for the offense of: **Theft of Property, §5-36-103, Class C Felony** and I hereby direct the Benton County Circuit Clerk to issue said warrant.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JUDGE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS**

STATE OF ARKANSAS

PLAINTIFF

VS.

CHRISTINE RENEE SOUTHARD

DEFENDANT

DOB: [REDACTED] W/F

AR DL# [REDACTED]

LKA: 42 Tamsworth Circle

Bella Vista, AR 72714

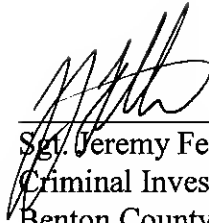
**AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE TO OBTAIN BOND**

Comes now Sgt. Jeremy Felton of the Sheriff's Office of Benton County, Arkansas, and under oath doth state:

On May 9, 2012, an arrest warrant was issued for the arrest of Christine Southard for the offense of Theft of Property, §5-36-103, Class C Felony. The probable cause to obtain warrant is attached. On May 9, 2012, Southard was arrested by Deputy Carlton and transported to the Benton County Jail for a bond hearing.

A check of the Defendant's criminal history reveals that the Defendant has no criminal history.

Based upon the foregoing, the nature of the crime, the Defendant's risk of flight, the likelihood of conviction and the possible severity of penalty that could be imposed, the State joins me in requesting that a bond of **\$25,000** be set on the Defendant, **Christine Renee Southard, W/F DOB: 10/5/1970** for the offenses of, **Theft of Property, §5-36-103, Class C Felony.**


  
Sgt. Jeremy Felton  
Criminal Investigator  
Benton County Sheriff's Office

STATE OF ARKANSAS    )

COUNTY OF BENTON    )

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2012.



  
Notary Public

My commission expires July 2, 2019

APPROVED BY: Carrie Dobbs



**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS**

STATE OF ARKANSAS

PLAINTIFF

v.

CHRISTINE RENEE SOUTHARD

DEFENDANT

DOB: 10/05/1970, W/F

AR DL# 907017847

LKA: 42 Tamsworth Circle

Bella Vista, AR 72714

**ORDER OF PROBABLE CAUSE AND ORDER TO APPEAR**

Now on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 2012, came on for consideration in the matter of Probable Cause for the continued detention of Christine Renee Southard; witnesses having been sworn and evidence having been taken, the Court finds that there is sufficient probable cause for detaining Christine Renee Southard, for the offense(s) of: **Theft of Property, §5-36-103, Class C Felony.**

WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Defendant be released on his/her personal recognizance and Defendant is hereby ordered to appear on the **18<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in the Benton County Circuit Court, Division I**, for further proceedings.

OR

WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Defendant be detained upon probable cause for the offense(s) set forth hereinabove in the custody of the Sheriff of Benton County, Arkansas, without bond, pending further proceedings.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that bail be set in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure the Defendant's future appearances, and should such be posted on behalf of Defendant, the Defendant is hereby ordered to appear on **18<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in the Benton County Circuit Court, Division I**, for further proceedings.

THE NATURE OF THE BAIL IS ORDERED TO BE:

\_\_\_\_\_ Cash or Corporate Surety Bond

\_\_\_\_\_ 10% Deposit

\_\_\_\_\_ Defendant's Unsecured Signature Bond

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

\_\_\_\_\_ Attorney at Law, be appointed to represent the Defendant.

\_\_\_\_\_ No attorney be appointed at this time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Have no contact, direct or indirect, whatsoever with the  
victim(s) and their families.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Judge